

## COUNTRY DATA: ITALY: Information from the CIA World Factbook

### INTRODUCTION


Italy became a nation-state in 1861 when the regional states of the peninsula, along with Sardinia and Sicily, were united under King Victor EMMANUEL II. An era of parliamentary government came to a close in the early 1920s when Benito MUSSOLINI established a Fascist dictatorship. His alliance with Nazi Germany led to Italy's defeat in World War II. A democratic republic replaced the monarchy in 1946 and economic revival followed. Italy was a charter member of NATO and the European Economic Community (EEC). It has been at the forefront of European economic and political unification, joining the Economic and Monetary Union in 1999. Persistent problems include illegal immigration, organized crime, corruption, high unemployment, sluggish economic growth, and the low incomes and technical standards of southern Italy compared with the prosperous north.

### GEOGRAPHY

Location	Southern Europe, a peninsula extending into the central Mediterranean Sea, northeast of Tunisia.
Area	301,340 sq km
Climate	Predominantly Mediterranean; Alpine in far north; hot, dry in south.
Natural Resources	Coal, mercury, zinc, potash, marble, barite, asbestos, pumice, fluorspar, feldspar, pyrite (sulfur), natural gas and crude oil reserves, fish, arable land.
Total Renewable Water Resources	175 cu km (2005)
Freshwater Withdrawal	41.98 cu km/yr (18%/37%/45%)
Natural Hazards	Regional risks include landslides, mudflows, avalanches, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, flooding; land subsidence in Venice. Volcanism: Italy experiences significant volcanic activity; Etna (elev. 3,330 m, 10,925 ft), which is in eruption as of 2010, is Europe's most active volcano; flank eruptions pose a threat to nearby Sicilian villages; Etna, along with the famous Vesuvius, which remains a threat to the millions of nearby residents in the Bay of Naples area, have both been deemed "Decade Volcanoes" by the International Association of Volcanology and Chemistry of the Earth's Interior, worthy of study due to their explosive history and close proximity to human populations; Stromboli, on its namesake island, has also been continuously active with moderate volcanic activity; other historically active volcanoes include Campi Flegrei, Ischia, Larderello, Pantelleria, Vulcano, and Vulsini.
Environmental Issues	Air pollution from industrial emissions such as sulfur dioxide; coastal and inland rivers polluted from industrial and agricultural effluents; acid rain damaging lakes; inadequate industrial waste treatment and disposal facilities.

### PEOPLE

Population	58,090,681 (July 2010 est.)
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<b>Ethnic Groups</b>	Italian (includes small clusters of German-, French-, and Slovene-Italians in the north and Albanian-Italians and Greek-Italians in the south).
<b>Religions</b>	Roman Catholic 90% (approximately; about one-third practicing), other 10% (includes mature Protestant and Jewish communities and a growing Muslim immigrant community).
<b>Languages</b>	Italian (official), German (parts of Trentino-Alto Adige region are predominantly German speaking), French (small French-speaking minority in Valle d'Aosta region), Slovene (Slovene-speaking minority in the Trieste-Gorizia area).
<b>Literacy Rate</b>	98.4%
<b>Major Infectious Diseases</b>	HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: 0.4% (2007 est.) 
<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	
<b>Type</b>	Republic
<b>Independence</b>	17 March 1861 (Kingdom of Italy proclaimed; Italy was not finally unified until 1870).
<b>Constitution</b>	Passed 11 December 1947, effective 1 January 1948; amended many times.
<b>Legal System</b>	Based on civil law system; appeals treated as new trials; judicial review under certain conditions in Constitutional Court; has not accepted compulsory International Court of Justice jurisdiction.
<b>ECONOMY</b>	
<b>Agricultural Products</b>	Fruits, vegetables, grapes, potatoes, sugar beets, soybeans, grain, olives; beef, dairy products; fish.
<b>Industries</b>	Tourism, machinery, iron and steel, chemicals, food processing, textiles, motor vehicles, clothing, footwear, ceramics.
<b>Import commodities</b>	Engineering products, chemicals, transport equipment, energy products, minerals and nonferrous metals, textiles and clothing; food, beverages, and tobacco.
<b>Import Partners</b>	Germany 16.68%, France 8.82%, China 6.53%, Netherlands 5.63%, Spain 4.3%, Russia 4.12%, Belgium 4.08% (2009).
<b>Export Commodities</b>	Engineering products, textiles and clothing, production machinery, motor vehicles, transport equipment, chemicals; food, beverages and tobacco; minerals, and nonferrous metals.
<b>Export Partners</b>	Germany 12.6%, France 11.57%, US 5.92%, Spain 5.69%, UK 5.13%, Switzerland 4.69% (2009).
<b>Per Capita GDP</b>	\$29,900 (2009 est.)
<b>Population below poverty line</b>	N/A

\*CITATIONS: All information included above is extracted from the CIA World Factbook except where noted.